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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/UMB JOE WANG, EUR/ERA RACHEL WOLFE, AND
EUR/CE JAMIE MOORE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/04/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EUN](#) [BO](#) [HU](#)
SUBJECT: HUNGARY NOT READY TO LIFT BELARUS SANCTIONS

REF: SECSTATE 112644

Classified By: Political Officer Jon Martinson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) PolOff discussed reftel November 4 with the MFA's EU Foreign Policy Department Section Chief Karoly Sardi. Sardi stated that Hungary holds positions similar to those outlined in the talking points, commenting that Hungary "is not ready to lift sanctions now." He expressed the GoH view that they need to remain in place for at least one more year. Continuing, Sardi underscored that, in order to lift sanctions, a sustainable reform process is required to ensure there is no back-peddling, stressing that democratization and human rights reforms, along with a free media are currently not evident in Belarus.

12. (C) Referencing a Belarus sanctions discussion during the upcoming GAERC, Sardi said that he does not anticipate a strong debate during the November session, viewing it as a straight-forward issue. That said, he noted that there are some EU member States who have a less-than-favorable view of sanctions in general, preferring to offer "carrots rather than sticks." Sardi also raised Belarus' debt situation with Russia as a key element affecting efforts to move reforms forward.

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